

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name: Wilson, Lucy and J. Vassie, House

other names/site number: N/A

2. Location

street & number: 425 Hillcrest Drive not for publication N/A

city or town: High Point vicinity N/A

state: North Carolina code: NC county: Guilford code: 081 zip code: 27262

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official

Date _____

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

See continuation sheet.

_____ See continuation sheet.
determined eligible for the National Register

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

Guilford County, North Carolina
County and State

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings [house & garage]
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC	Sub: single dwelling
DOMESTIC	secondary structure

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC	Sub: single dwelling
DOMESTIC	secondary structure

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)
LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS:
 Colonial Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: brick

roof: ceramic tile

walls: brick

wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1926

Significant Dates

1926

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Klein, Fred B., architect

Wilson, Lucy and J. Vassie, House
Name of Property

Guilford County, North Carolina
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.5 acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	587690	3981290	3	—	—	—
2	—	—	—	4	—	—	—

— See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Nancy H. Campbell

organization: _____ date: Dec. 10, 2004

street & number: 123 East Longview Ave. telephone: 614-447-8047

city or town: Columbus state: OH zip code: 43202

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name: Dr. and Mrs. Donald C. Swing

street & number: 425 Hillcrest Drive telephone 336-887-1212 (home) or 336-885-0172 (office)

city or town: High Point state: NC zip code: 27262

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

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Lucy and J. Vassie Wilson House, Guilford County, North Carolina

SECTION 7: NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Lucy and J. Vassie Wilson House is a two-story brick Federal Revival dwelling built in 1926 at 425 Hillcrest Drive in High Point, N.C. The Wilson House stands on a half-acre lot in the Emerywood neighborhood, a subdivision with curving, tree-lined streets and large lots. Emerywood was platted in the early 1920s by developer Stephen C. Clark and designed by Earl Sumner Draper.

The Wilson House is centered on a southeast corner lot at the intersection of Hillcrest and Edgedale Drives. Behind the house, there is a gently sloped yard. The yard is landscaped with grass and scattered mature and young trees. There are trees on the perimeter of the property, between the street and the sidewalk. On the Hillcrest Drive side, there are two mature pin oaks that were probably planted in the 1920s, during the early years of Emerywood's development. On the Edgedale Drive side, there is a string of new red maple trees and crepe myrtles. Large pine trees near the southern property line offer year-round shade and privacy.

At the south end of the lot, there is a three-car garage, which is reached from Edgedale Drive by a short driveway, and from Hillcrest Drive by a long curved driveway that travels through the house's porte-cochere.

Behind the 1926 garage, on the southeast corner of the lot, there is a shady sunken garden. On the lot line there is a retaining wall with a trellised seating area. From this area there are three steps that lead to a flat area of lawn.

Built in 1926, the Wilson House is a bilaterally symmetrical, two-story brick house with Federal Revival-style elements, including blind arches over the windows adorned with bas reliefs of garlands and urns, three-part windows, jack arches with keystones of limestone, a modillion cornice, a semi-circular entrance portico, and quoins. The three-bay, double-pile house is topped with a tile hipped roof.

The main entrance is covered by a semicircular, columned porch, which is supported by four columns with stylized Corinthian capitals. The Chinese Chippendale-style balustrade on the upper level is topped with urns. The windows on the front of the house are all three-part, double-hung windows. The two first-floor windows have six-over-nine light sash flanked by two-over-three sash. The three second-floor windows are six-over-six light sash flanked by two-over-two light sash. A flat brick arch with central limestone keystone tops each window.

A modillion cornice wraps around the building. The tiled, hipped roof features three hipped-roof dormers on the façade and one on the back, with the dormer in the center being slightly larger; all have casement windows.

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Lucy and J. Vassie Wilson House, Guilford County, North Carolina

On the east side of the house there is a porch partially enclosed to create a sunroom. On the west side there is a porte-cochere. Both the porch and the porte-cochere are supported by Doric-style columns and are topped with a Chinese Chippendale balustrade. The rear elevation includes a central, one-bay two-story brick extension, appended to which is a one-story brick ell topped with a glazed sleeping porch.

The Wilson House features an irregular plan and not the traditional, central passage plan flanked by identical rooms. The double front doors open directly into the living room that has a fireplace featuring a three-part Federal-style mantel. Adjacent to the living room, at the front of the house, is a smaller room designated in the blueprints as the library.

To the rear of the living room is the dining room. This room has a crystal chandelier that appears original to the house. An ornate plaster medallion on the ceiling surrounds the chandelier. From the dining room, a small sunroom extends to the south and from that room there is a double door to the covered porch.

A second doorway in the living room opens into a stair hall, which leads to the breakfast room at the rear of the house and to the porte-cochere on its west side. Original cabinetry is found in the breakfast room. Next to the breakfast room is the kitchen, where storage and pantry areas are found at the rear of the house. There is a lavatory in the stair hall, near the library. With the exception of the kitchen's cabinets and countertops, which have been replaced, all of these features are original.

Upstairs there are four bedrooms and two bathrooms. The master bedroom, located above the living room in the northeast corner of the house, has a fireplace and an adjoining bathroom. The southwest bedroom, located over the kitchen, includes a sleeping porch that has windows on three sides.

The bathrooms have most of their original fixtures. The only replacements are the toilets in the lavatory and the second bathroom upstairs. The bathrooms have the original white wall tiles. The bathtubs are in alcoves with arched ceilings.

Interior details include plaster walls with deep crown moldings, raised box moldings on the living and dining room walls that resemble wood paneling, and mitered moldings around doorways and windows. Floors in the living room and dining room are red oak laid in concentric rectangles. Contrasting boards of black walnut and sycamore wood provide a decorative border. In the living room the border is sycamore wood with a black walnut center; the dining room uses the opposite, black walnut bands with a sycamore center. On the second story of the house, the hall and bedroom floors are all sycamore.

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Lucy and J. Vassie Wilson House, Guilford County, North Carolina

The three-car brick garage was constructed in 1926. Like the house, the garage features a hipped, tile roof. It still has the original swinging wood doors. On the front, there is a wide roof dormer with three windows that echo the three dormers in the roof of the house. In back there is a shed dormer. Inside, there is a stairway to the second floor where domestic employees were housed in an apartment with a full bathroom.

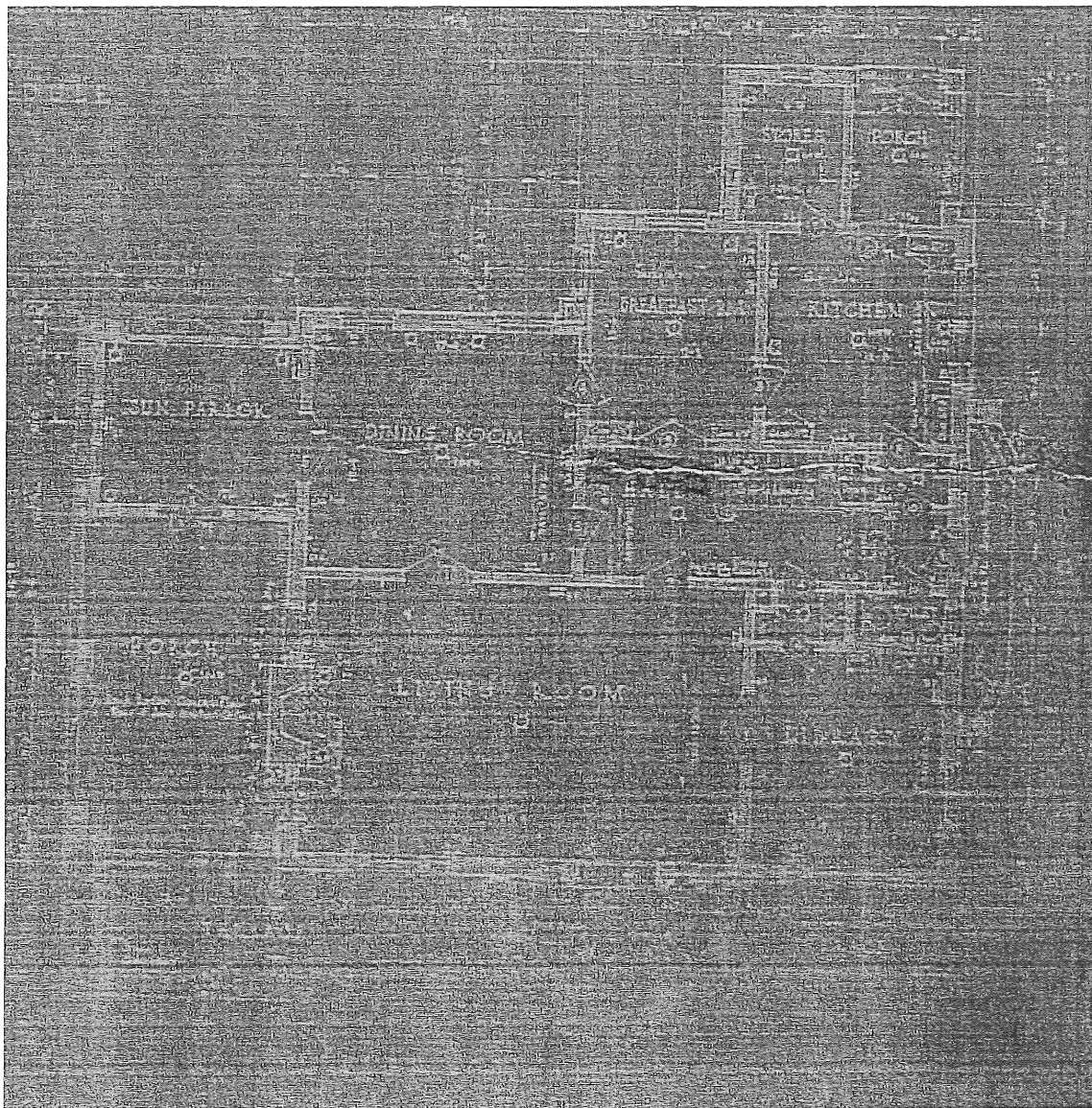
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Lucy and J. Vassie Wilson House, Guilford County, North Carolina

Original Blueprint of the First Floor



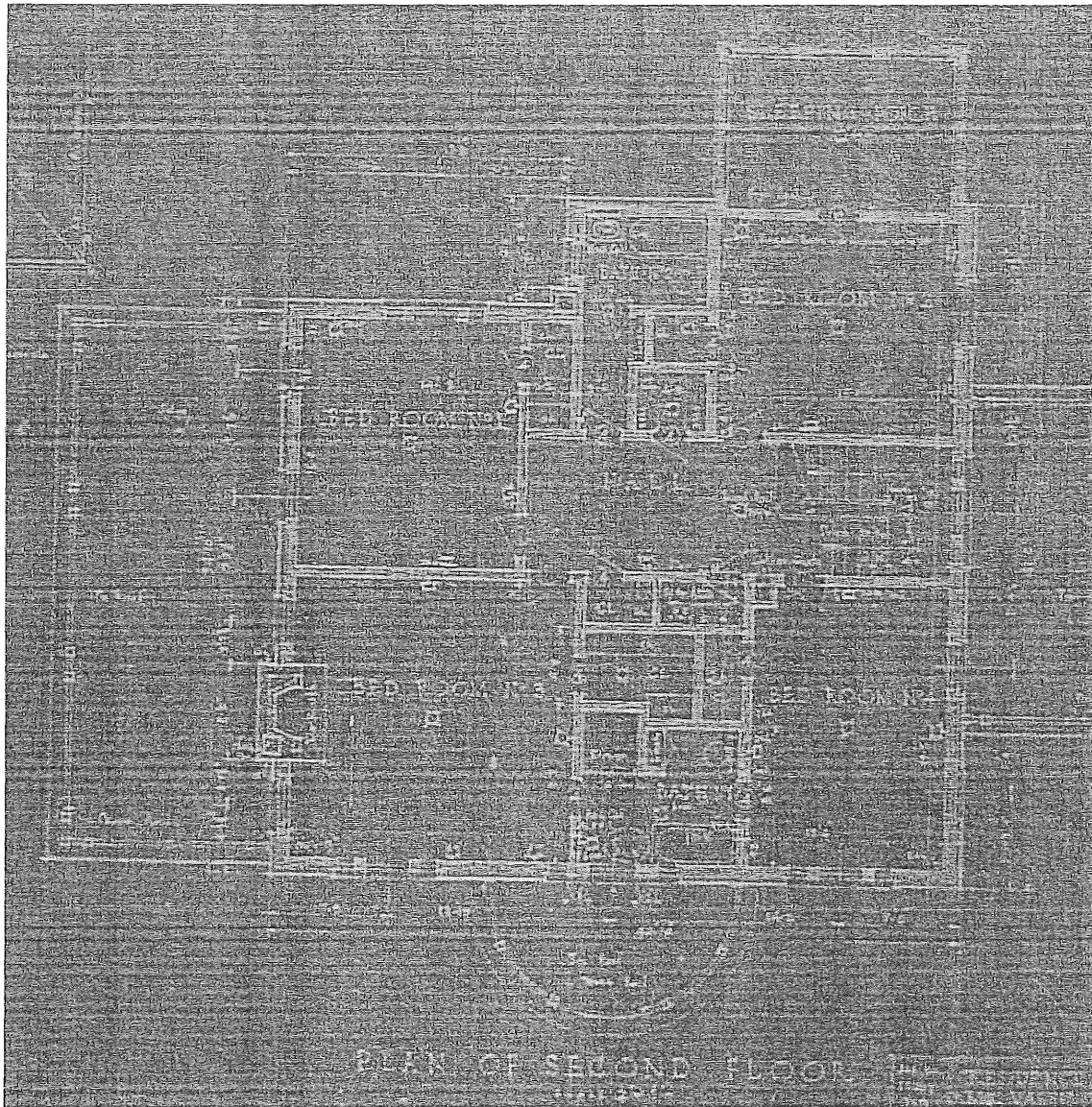
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Lucy and J. Vassie Wilson House, Guilford County, North Carolina

Original Blueprint of the Second Floor



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Lucy and J. Vassie Wilson House,
Guilford County, North Carolina

SECTION 8: STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary:

The Lucy and J. Vassie Wilson House, built in 1926 in High Point, North Carolina, meets National Register Criterion C for architecture as a locally significant example of the Federal Revival style. The two-story, brick house features Federal Revival-style elements such as blind arches above the first-floor tripartite windows that are adorned with bas reliefs of garlands and urns, jack arches with keystones of limestone, modillion cornice, elaborate semi-circular front porch surmounted with a Chinese Chippendale balustrade, and brick quoining. The bilaterally symmetrical exterior belies the irregular, less formal interior plan that includes popular early twentieth-century spaces such as a glazed sleeping porch, sunroom, butler's pantry, breakfast room, and side stairpassage with entrance from the porte-cochere. A three-car, brick garage with tile hipped roof stands to the rear of the house and was also constructed in 1926.

Designed by architect Fred B. Klein, the house was one of the first residences to be completed in the 1923 Emerywood subdivision of High Point, N.C.¹ Emerywood, with curving, tree-lined streets and large lots, was platted by developer Stephen C. Clark and designed by planner Earl Sumner Draper. Fred B. Klein worked for Stephen C. Clark, and designed other houses in the neighborhood, including his own Colonial Revival style house.

Historical Background:

J. Vassie Wilson (b. 1888) and his wife, the former Lucy Kirkman (b. 1889), were both natives of High Point. J. Vassie Wilson, who through family connections, enjoyed success in business, and served in executive positions with his brother and brother-in-law in several companies. In the early 1920s, Mr. Wilson served as secretary-treasurer of the Knox Upholstery Company, Inc., residing at 205 Lindsay Street with his wife.² The president of the company, W. G. Kirkman was the brother of Mr. Wilson's wife, the former Lucy Kirkman.³ In the late 1920s, Mr. Wilson became the president of the Bell Furniture Company, and he and his wife commissioned Fred B. Klein to design a house for them at 425 Hillcrest Drive in the new Emerywood development.⁴ The Wilsons had four children, J. Vassie Junior (b. 1910), Robert (b. 1912), Don (b. 1921), and Mary Jane (b. 1924). The house at 425 Hillcrest Street was valued at \$40,000 and they retained sufficient financial resources to employ an African American woman named Mattie Perry as a live-in servant.⁵

¹ Historic Architecture Inventory, Guilford County, North Carolina, 1996.

² High Point City Directory, 1921-22, p. 292.

³ E-mail message dated Nov. 9, 2002, to Nancy Campbell from Mary Lib Clark Joyce, High Point historian.

⁴ High Point City Directory, 1929-30, p. 426.

⁵ Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930: Guilford County, North Carolina, Population Schedule, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (microfilm, State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh).

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Lucy and J. Vassie Wilson House,
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By mid-1930, with the nationwide economic downturn, J. Vassie Wilson became unemployed and his oldest son, a laborer in a cotton mill, was the only employed member of the family.

In 1933 or 1934, the Wilsons suffered a foreclosure on their house, and the property was sold to Mr. and Mrs. J. Ben Cooper.⁶ By 1935, J. Vassie and Lucy Wilson had moved in with their oldest son, Julius V. Wilson, Jr. and his wife Elizabeth at 517 Otteray Drive (three blocks south of Hillcrest Drive). J. Vassie Sr. was still unemployed.⁷ Two years later, J. Vassie Sr. and Lucy were separated; J. Vassie had established the Wilson Upholstery Company and served as its president. He lived at 215½ North Main Street. Lucy K. Wilson lived in apartment four at 1003 North Main Street and worked as a stenographer.

The architect of 425 Hillcrest Drive, Fred B. Klein (b. 1885), moved to High Point in the mid-1920s from Ohio. The Klein family lived at 304 Lindsay Street and he worked as an architect in Room 407 of the Commercial National Bank Building.⁸ Stephen C. Clark and the Own-A-Home Company occupied Rooms 407 to 409 in the same building, suggesting that Klein worked for Clark's development company.⁹ In 1926, Klein designed and built a house for his wife and two children, just two blocks west of the Wilson House.¹⁰ In 1930, Klein's house was assessed for \$20,000, half the evaluation of the Wilson House.¹¹ That same year, Klein had moved his office to 114½ West Washington Street.¹² He was now one of four architects working in High Point.¹³ By 1933, the Kleins had moved to 120 Thurston Street; within two years, the Kleins moved out of High Point.¹⁴ Although Klein worked as an architect in High Point for almost ten years, only two buildings have been attributed to him, the Wilson House and his own house on Hillcrest Drive.

Architecture Context: Colonial Revival Architecture in High Point, North Carolina

After the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876, where Colonial houses were featured, Colonial Revival-style residences of many varieties, from rustic to grand, became increasingly popular. The style has consistently remained popular, especially from ca. 1910 through 1940. The exterior of the Lucy and J. Vassie Wilson House features Federal Revival style elements, including bas reliefs of garlands and urns, three-part windows, jack arches with keystones of limestone, a modillion cornice, and windows in a blind arch. The Wilson House is based on

⁶ Beth Koonce, Communication with Nancy Campbell.

⁷ High Point City Directory, 1935, p. 469.

⁸ High Point City Directory, 1925-26, p. 241.

⁹ High Point City Directory, 1925-26, p. 458.

¹⁰ High Point City Directory, 1927, p. 260.

¹¹ Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930: Guilford County, North Carolina, Population Schedule, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (microfilm, State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh).

¹² High Point City Directory, 1930-31, p. 285.

¹³ High Point City Directory, 1930-31, pp. 471-472.

¹⁴ High Point City Directory, 1933.

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Lucy and J. Vassie Wilson House,
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high-style Federal-era buildings, especially those constructed in the mid-Atlantic and New England region from ca. 1785 through ca. 1825.

The Wilson House takes stylistic features from houses such as Tudor Place (NHL), located in the Georgetown section of the District of Columbia. Similarities include the two-story hipped-roof form, side wings, three-part windows, blind arches, and the semi-circular porch. Tudor Place was designed by Dr. William Thornton, the first architect of the U.S. Capitol, and built in 1815-16 for the granddaughter of Martha Washington, Martha Custis Peter, and her husband Thomas Peter. The garden side of the house's two-story main block has four three-part windows (two on each story). The two ground-floor windows are set in blind arches. The domed porch is circular, encompassing a portion of the interior central passage as well as an exterior semicircular space.

Another inspiration might have been Gore Place (NHL), located in Waltham, Massachusetts. Built in 1806, this was the country home of Christopher Gore, a Massachusetts governor and senator, and his wife Rebecca. Gore Place is a two-story brick house with symmetrical wings. The windows on the wings are set in blind arches. There is a semi-circular wall extending from the two-story main part of the house that contained the oval drawing room.

While the exterior of the Wilson House was based on Federal era, high style dwellings, the plan was thoroughly modern. Instead of a bilaterally symmetrical arrangement of rooms, the house has an irregular plan that reveals early twentieth-century ideals concerning comfort, ventilation, and convenience. Rather than entering into a formal passage with an elegant staircase, visitors enter directly into a large living room. The stair hall in the Wilson House is shifted to the side of the house and is accessed through the porte-cochere, shifting the primary entrance access from those entering from the street to those traveling by automobile. The house included traditional rooms such as a library but also contained a sunroom and a sleeping porch off one of the bedrooms. Sleeping porches became popular in the early twentieth century because fresh air was considered essential for good health.¹⁵ The garage, which could house three cars, also accommodated domestic employees in an upstairs apartment.

The city of High Point, N.C., has numerous early to mid-twentieth-century Colonial Revival residences, including examples that take their inspiration from mid-Atlantic, Dutch, and Southern prototypes. The Lucy and J. Vassie Wilson House ranks among the finest, and retains excellent integrity.

Among the first Colonial Revival style houses to be built in High Point was the J. Elwood Cox House, constructed ca. 1890. The Cox House was frame dwelling that featured a Palladian

¹⁵ Elizabeth Collins Cromley, "A History of American Beds and Bedrooms," in Thomas Carter and Bernard L. Herman, *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, IV* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1991) 177-186.

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Lucy and J. Vassie Wilson House,
Guilford County, North Carolina

window, prominent dormer windows, and paired columns; this house was demolished in 1955.¹⁶ Another early example of the style is the R. O. Lindsay House (1002 Johnson Street), constructed in 1912. The frame Lindsay House features a wraparound porch, pedimented dormers, and paired Doric porch columns.

High Point prospered in the 1920s, and a number of architect-designed Colonial Revival-style houses were built in the newly-platted subdivisions. Architect Harry Barton of Greensboro, N.C. designed a large, six-bay, frame residence for J.D. Cox (803 West Farriss Street) in the early 1920s. The house featured a large Palladian window and was planned to appear as if it had developed in stages. The Fred Tate House (600 Emerywood Drive) was designed by the Winston-Salem based firm of Northrup and O'Brien and as with the Wilson House, used mid-Atlantic Colonial and Federal-era houses as a source of stylistic elements. The designer of the E. L. Briggs House (920 Fairway Drive), constructed ca. 1945, turned to North Carolina late eighteenth and nineteenth-century houses for inspiration, using beaded siding, molding, and dormer windows that were derived features found on the houses featured in the 1940 publication, *Early Architecture of North Carolina*.¹⁷

One other house in High Point can be definitely attributed to Fred Klein, his own residence two blocks from the Wilson House. The Klein House (606 Hillcrest Drive) was also constructed in 1926, and is a two-story brick house that combines elements from both the Colonial Revival and Tudor Revival styles, including wall gables, brick quoining, and bay window.

The Lucy and J. Vassie Wilson House stands out among the Colonial Revival style dwellings in High Point due to its relatively strict adherence to the Federal Revival style and for its integrity. The intact plan illustrates early-to-mid-twentieth century ideals concerning comfort, convenience, and ventilation.

¹⁶ Benjamin Briggs, Draft National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Historic and Architectural Resources of High Point, North Carolina, 1859-1950," 2000, F6.

¹⁷ Briggs, F6, F7.

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Lucy and J. Vassie Wilson House,
Guilford County, North Carolina

SECTION 9: MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

Briggs, Benjamin. Draft National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Historic and Architectural Resources of High Point, North Carolina," 2000.

The Brooklyn Museum, *The American Renaissance, 1876-1917*. (Brooklyn, N.Y.: The Brooklyn Museum, Division of Publications and Marketing Services, 1979.

Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930: Guilford County, North Carolina, Population Schedule, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (microfilm, State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh).

Guilford County Historic Preservation Commission, *Historic Architecture Survey, Guilford County, North Carolina, 1996*, Kaye Graybeal, surveyor.

High Point (Guilford County, N. C.) City Directory including Archdale, Jamestown, and Trinity. (Richmond, Va.: Hill Directory Company), 1923 to 1937.

Joyce, Mary Lib (daughter of Stephen C. Clark), interview, Nov. 1, 2002.

H. McKelden Smith, *Architectural Resources, An Inventory of Historic Architecture, High Point, Jamestown, Gibsonville, Guilford County*. (Raleigh, N.C.: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1979).

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Lucy and J. Vassie Wilson House,
Guilford County, North Carolina

SECTION 10: GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property forms a trapezoid located on the southeast corner of Hillcrest Drive and Woodbrook Drive in High Point. The parcel encompasses approximately one-half of an acre, and is identified as parcel number 18000-2300000-30000-1 in Guilford County, at 425 Hillcrest Drive, High Point.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary encompasses the original Lot 52 of the Emerywood subdivision.

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Section number: Photos

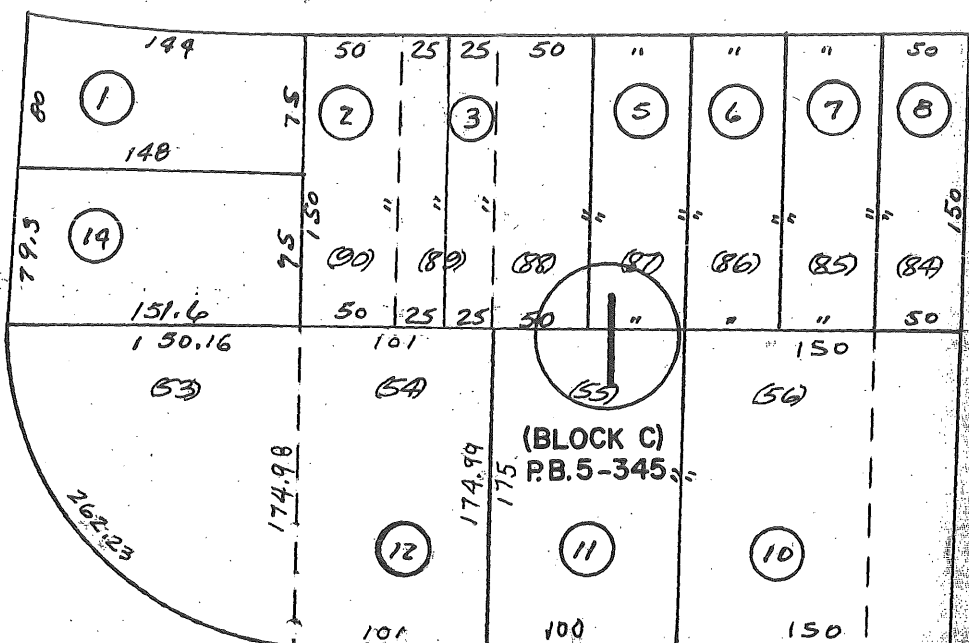
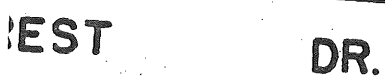
Lucy and J. Vassie Wilson House
Guilford County, North Carolina

PHOTOGRAPHS

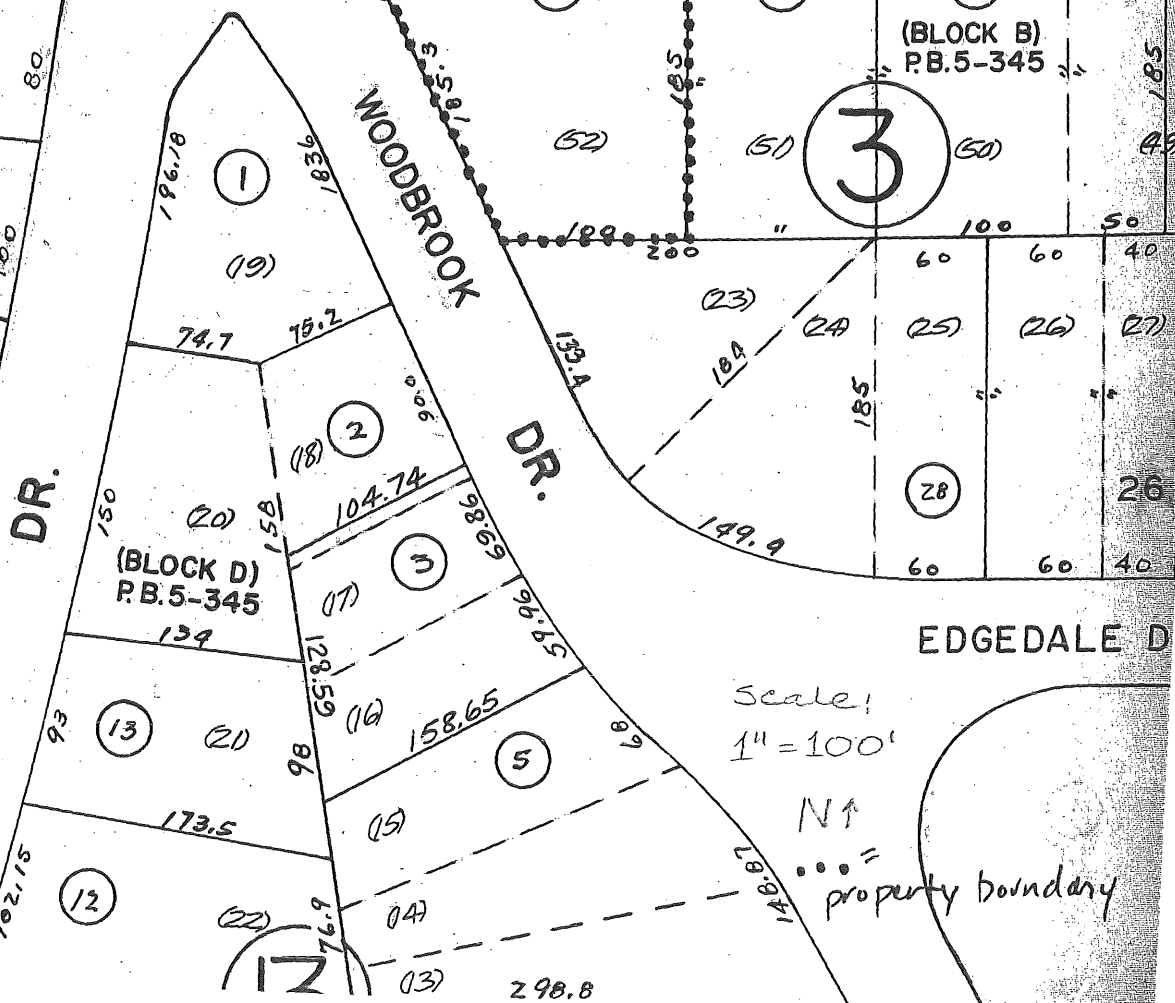
All of the photographs were taken by Nancy Campbell on June 1, 2003. All negatives are housed with the North Carolina Division of Archives and History in Raleigh, North Carolina.

1. North elevation, looking south
2. Detail, portico on north elevation, looking south
3. Detail, window on first floor, north elevation, looking south
4. West and South elevation, looking northeast
5. Garage, looking southeast
6. Mantel, Living room, looking northeast
7. Stairhall, looking west

LEXINGTON AVE.



HILLCREST DRIVE



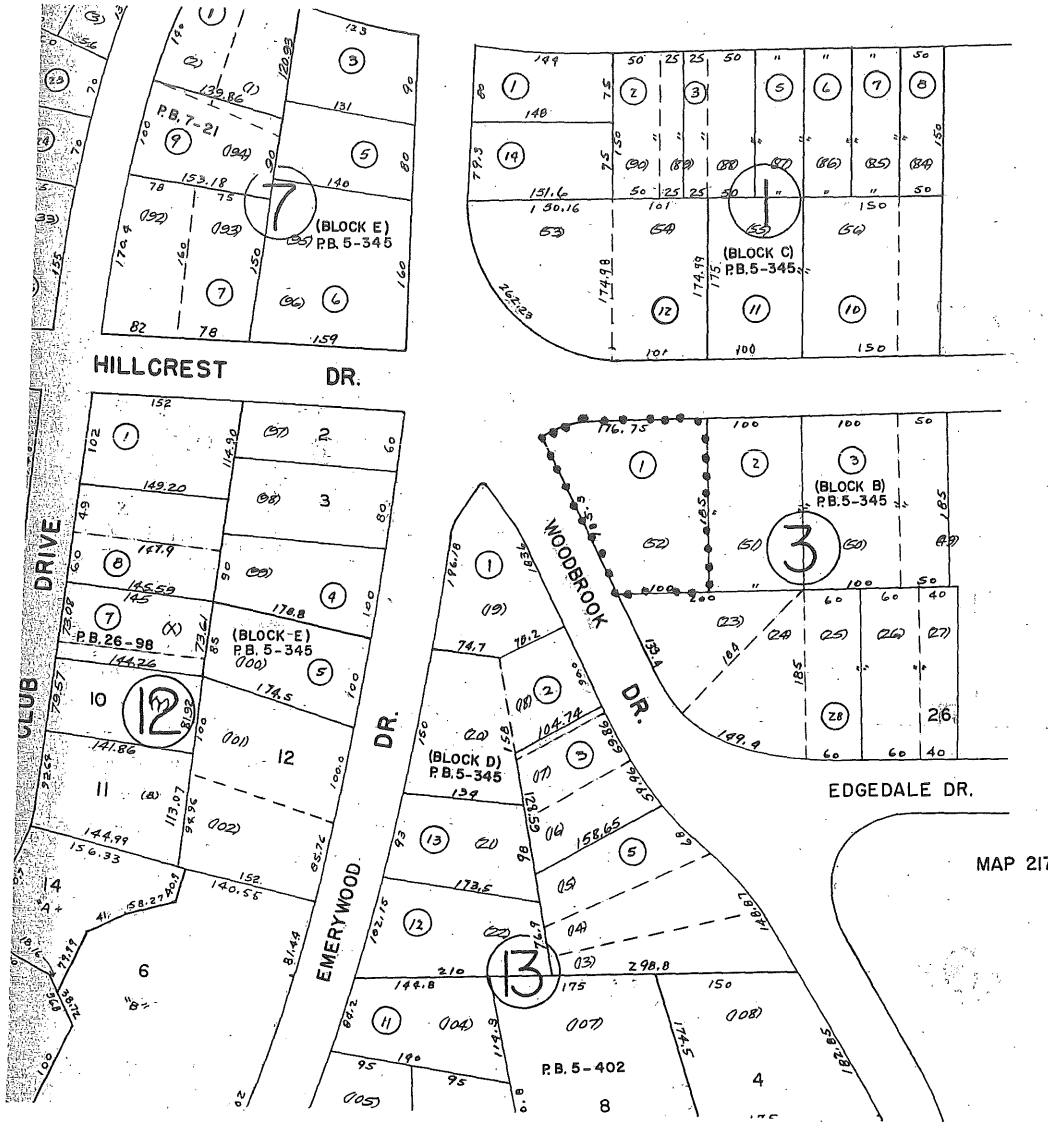
Scale:
1" = 100'

N1

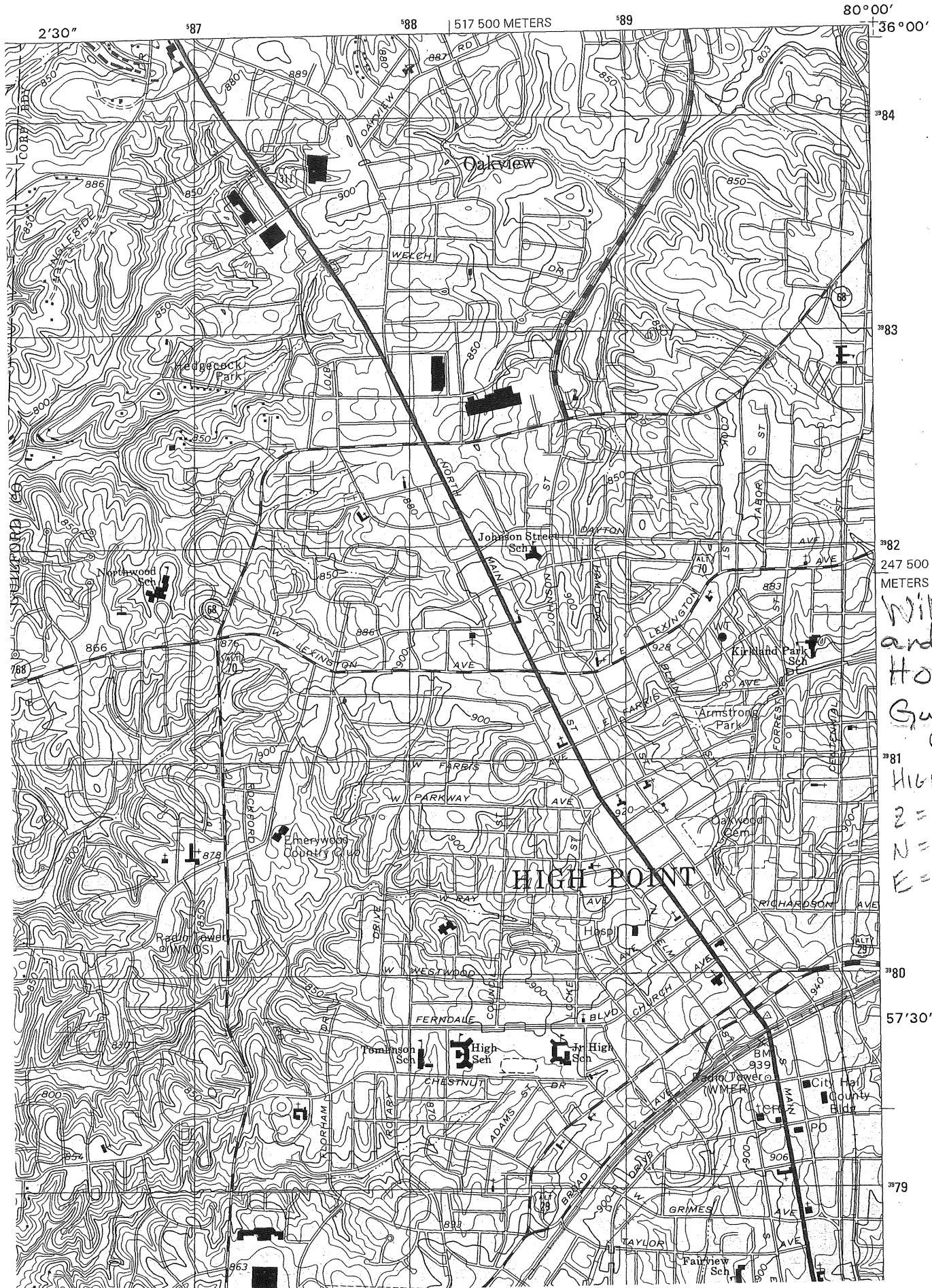
property boundary

Wilson, Lucy and
J. Vassie, House
High Point
Guilford County

... = historic property
boundary



HIGH POINT WEST QUADRANGLE NORTH CAROLINA 7.5-MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



Wilson, Lucy
 and J. Vassie
 House
 Guilford
 County
 HIGH POINT USGS
 West
 2 = 17
 N = 3981290
 E = 587690

